# CONNECTiONS

## Pivot! Moving a library forward when COVID gets in the way

**'Pivot' used to be a word** from the netball court, then it became the butt of a joke from the much loved *Friends* TV show, but over the last 12 months it has become an everyday reality in our schools.

In 2020, our school calendar was full of excursions and incursions overwritten with the word 'Cancelled'. However, in a space where learning is a purpose and a priority, this also provided opportunities to 'pivot' and enhance our programs in other ways. School libraries were no exception. With the awareness that we didn't want to force a complete change of direction, both educationally and in the values our school libraries elicit, we pivoted to other opportunities to enhance our students' learning.

The first challenge and opportunity was the closure of our local public library, which is conveniently located 200 m from our school. Many of our students frequent the local library after school to access both the collection and their chess sets. We found more students staying on in the library after the school day was over, and took the opportunity to refresh our games collection. I would never have known 'Exploding Kittens' was a card game if it were not for COVID.

As our students were also regular borrowers of books from the public library, I took it upon myself to demonstrate the ebook collection they offered. This was both a blessing and a burden – students were then coming to

**SCIS** Schools Catalogue Information Service

MIX
Paper from responsible sources
FSC® C007821
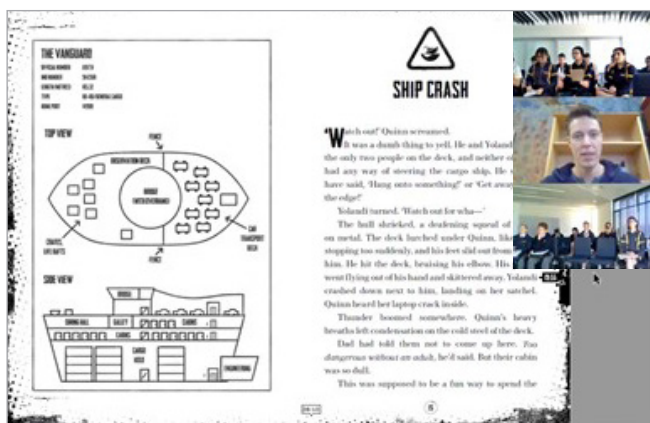www.fsc.org

Climate Active — Carbon Neutral ORGANISATION

# CONNECT WITH SCIS

www.scisdata.com



Zoom author talk with Jack Heath.

see me when they could not borrow the ebook they desired, as it was already on loan through the public library system. Another opportunity arose: with some pivoting of my own budget, I purchased our own ebook collection. Previous forays into ebooks in our library had not appeared to be financially viable solutions. I had found the borrowing rate to be low and the cost to be prohibitive. However, with ebooks being the only solution for the students to have access to new books during the school holidays, our own ebook subscription suddenly became a success. My initial discussion with the Business Manager involved the words 'trial', 'COVID' and 'educational outcomes'. In the end, the decision to resubscribe this year came down to a viable collection that sits alongside our physical collection and is accessed frequently and fervently for leisure and curriculum reading.

Our next challenge and opportunity arose with the cancellation of a long-planned author visit to be held late in Term 1. Initially we baulked at the alternative offered, a Zoom talk. We had 130 Year 9 students to entertain, they were not familiar with Zoom meetings and we ourselves did not feel up to the challenge. Fortunately, a temporary lockdown in South Australia refined both our own and our students' online meeting skills. The patience of the author was to be commended as he recommended structures and activities that would suit an online delivery. This was one of our greatest pivots – did I mention 130 Year 9s? We split this group into three and I am pleased to say that Jack Heath is just as charming and engaging online as he is in person. Being online, we also snuck a few eager Year 7 students into the room, and the occasional wandering teacher. This has opened our staff up to many further opportunities for online guest speakers. Currently, we are in the process of moving one of our yearly excursions to local cultural
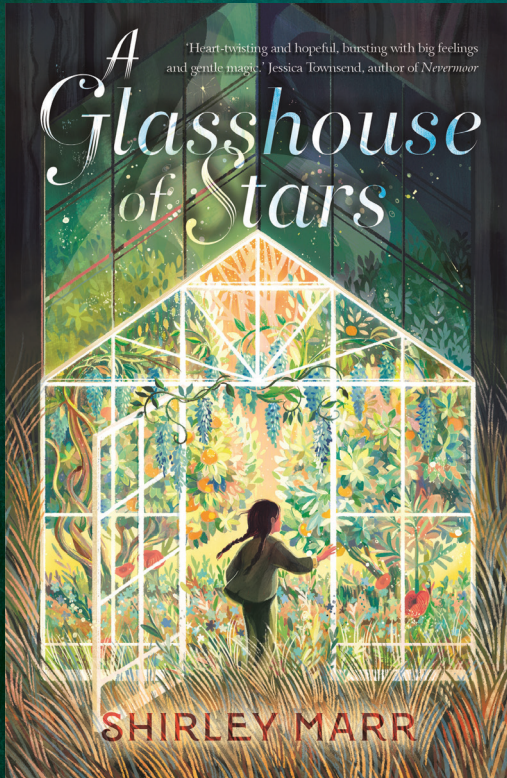
institutions to online visits to cultural institutions across the world. Through this method, the access to academics and experts has grown exponentially and our students are richer for the experience.

Then the greatest challenge arose, the postponement of Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Book Week to a date which proved challenging for our updated school calendar. Book Week has always been a feature in our calendar, even as a secondary school. Students and staff embrace it like a much-loved teddy bear. The option to cancel was discounted for many reasons, one being the wellbeing of our students, as by Term 3 the 'cancel culture' was starting to affect our teenagers. We took the decision to design our own homegrown 'Readers and Writers Week'. What could have been an opportunity to lighten our workload, opened us up to an opportunity for collaboration and innovation.

In the past we have honoured and celebrated the Book Week activities and resources; however, this year we tapped into our own toolbox. It started with our own 'Book of the Year' awards. Through the use of Microsoft Forms, students voted for their favourite book from a longlist, then a shortlist, leading to a semifinal and then at last to a grand final. For those students studying at home, they were able to engage with the hearty competition to see their book progress. For those on site, we displayed the gradually reducing list of books for all to see. As a secondary school, it can be difficult to engage students in reading, but more than 50 per cent of our students voted for their favourite book.

Next, we enriched our offerings by looking within, instead of outside, our community, with a Staff vs Students debate. The debate was held at lunchtime and conducted in a light-hearted manner, with the combination of a chaplain, an art teacher and an IT teacher, and invigilated by

# A Glasshouse of Stars

*'Heart-twisting and hopeful, bursting with big feelings and gentle magic.' Jessica Townsend, author of Nevermoor*

*When you look down you realise you have placed your palm over your chest. Your heart is aching. But in the best way.*

**SHIRLEY MARR**

Meixing Lim and her family have arrived in the New Land. But Meixing struggles to make sense of her life – she is embarrassed by her second-hand shoes and has trouble understanding the language at school. When her fragile universe is rocked by tragedy, it will take all of Meixing's resilience and bravery to find her place of belonging in the world.

Shirley Marr draws on her own childhood experience in this exquisite and powerful story of immigration and belonging. For ages 10+.

---
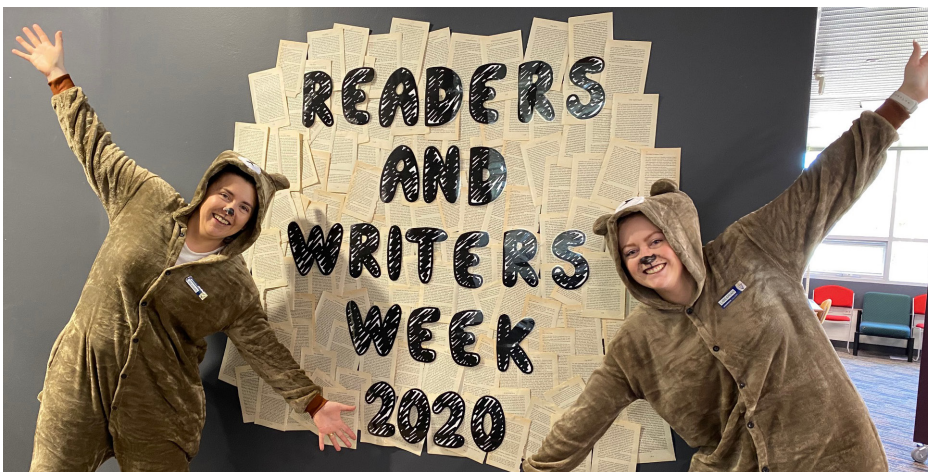


'LiBEARians' celebrating Readers and Writers Week 2020.

a maths teacher. Suddenly, Book Week had moved well beyond just books.

Dress-up Day was also well-received. The loss of Comic Con and other opportunities for our teenagers to cosplay was sorely felt, but as a school we were able to see students in their alter egos. There was, again, a small pivot – not all costumes were from books, but they were characters, the basis of stories, so equally valid. It was so successful and showed that sometimes you don't realise the gifts you have in your own community, gifts that we are sure to engage with into the future.

There is no question 2020 was a challenging year. However, in a space where we could not rely on the standard toolbox for libraries, we as a staff and a school community grew to embrace opportunities. Looking in, instead of looking out, has also opened us up to other avenues to explore: Living Libraries, mentorships, online collaborations are all going to feature in our future.

When I think of the word 'pivot', I do not think about turning around and changing your course, I think of continuing to move forward but in a manner which you had not originally intended. In this environment, staff and students demonstrated hidden skills, in novels we call these 'superpowers'. In our circumstances, the course chosen was the educational and wellbeing outcomes for our students, all of which were considered and enriched during this time and will be into the future.

**Image credits**
Images supplied by Catherine Barnes

---

**Catherine Barnes**
Teacher Librarian
Endeavour College
South Australia

Librarian for 20 years, teacher librarian for 10. Passionate advocate of connecting students with resources within and beyond their school library.

# HOW AN OLD BOOK CREATED A COMMITMENT TO BETTER REPRESENT FIRST NATIONS AUSTRALIANS

**When a Year 3 student brought his library book home, it sparked a chain of events that helped build a relationship between a teacher librarian and an Aboriginal journalist, who together are committed to bringing change to every school across the country.**

### A mother's anger: Kerry Klimm

When my 8-year-old showed me his library book, I knew immediately from the cover it wasn't going to be positive. I flicked through the pages and was disturbed at what I saw.

It took me back to my childhood – growing up in the '80s learning about 'The Aborigines', defined as nomadic people who wandered aimlessly until white people came and made us civilised.

Nothing I learnt in school reflected me, my family, our culture and history. My grandparents are both from the stolen generations and were removed from their families to a mission to live under oppressive conditions of 'The Act'. They had to ask for permission for everything: to marry, to work, even to buy underwear. My nanna's menstrual cycle was recorded by an anthropologist like he was studying animals.

I saw and lived the impact of racism and discrimination, of being dehumanised. I didn't want my son experiencing what I did. This book made me angry and should not have been on a library shelf in 2019 to be seen by young minds.

### A librarian's shock: Dale Robertson

When the book was brought to my attention, I was embarrassed and worried what else might be in our library that I didn't know about. Having come to an established library of over 30,000 resources I could have dug my head in the sand, claimed it wasn't my fault, removed one book and kept with the status quo.

But I needed to take ownership, take action and make sure it didn't happen again. As a non-Indigenous person, I don't claim to know an extensive amount about Indigenous cultures. I was educated in a schooling system of the 1980s that had its own bias, and even though I have friends, relatives and colleagues who have been continuing my education, I still have a lot to learn.

### Working together: Kerry and Dale

We arranged to meet on a regular basis to go through the resources, remove books and identify gaps. We started with a Queensland Studies Authority (now QCAA) document called 'Guidelines: Indigenous perspectives – selecting and evaluating resources' (QSA Dec 2007): qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/approach2/indigenous_g008_0712.pdf.

It gave us a starting point with questions to ask, like: Does [the item] perpetuate the concept of *terra nullius*? Does it ignore or misrepresent Aboriginal resistance to European occupation of the land? Does the material over-generalise? Are stereotyping and racist connotations present?

While a good starting point, we found parts of the guidelines problematic. They suggested starting from books published up until 1980, but we removed books published as late as 2015.

'Decolonising' the library required empathy, cultural competence and tenacity. With 30,000 books in the catalogue, it requires ongoing commitment to change and learning.

As the weeks progressed, we got better at identifying what made a quality text or one that needed to be removed. During this process we also located excellent resources, and we regularly share those with staff.

We discovered 19 books in our catalogue that didn't meet the criteria and made a spreadsheet with the CRN number and reasons for removing, with screenshots of each item.

> " We want our school library resources to provide accurate and informative material to educate all of our students on Indigenous perspectives. "

### Creating change

We presented this information to our school staff. We shared our journey and the database we had begun. Many teachers approached Dale, admitting they had been avoiding certain topics due to lack of knowledge and resources. They wanted to know more about relevant and accurate resources and how to make sure they embed Indigenous perspectives across all aspects of learning.

From this negative experience, we are developing a culture within our school that allows us to learn and grow as professionals and to help our students develop a broader understanding.

### Not isolated

Other Aboriginal families and Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators from across the country have approached Kerry wanting the list to take to their schools. They expressed their concerns about what their libraries housed and how there was a lack of resources and support to help them decolonise their collections.

We both continue to have conversations with people outside our school about our project. There are many who share our

Dale Robertson and Kerry Klimm in the school library.

concerns about this being a wider problem. There are many schools with large catalogues and very busy staff who don't have the time or experience to evaluate all of their resources.

### Decolonising all school libraries

This is too important to leave to chance. If we can avoid the distress we felt from being experienced by anyone else we will have made a difference. If we can help schools make a start with their collections and begin the conversation, we will continue to make a difference.

> " 'Decolonising' the library required empathy, cultural competence and tenacity. With 30,000 books in the catalogue, it requires ongoing commitment to change and learning. "

We strongly believe all schools need to take further action. We feel that there needs to be a shared location to store the database we have begun and continue to develop it. There should be a directive to all schools and libraries to evaluate their Indigenous resources on a regular basis.

We don't want other families to go through what Kerry and her son went through and we want our school library resources to provide accurate and informative material to educate all of our students on Indigenous perspectives.

### Image credits

Image supplied by Kerry Klimm and Dale Robertson

**Kerry Klimm**
Journalist and communications specialist
Gugu Yalanji and Koko Lamalama woman
flashblak.com.au

**Dale Robertson**
Teacher Librarian
Albany Hills State School

# WHAT THE SCHOOL LIBRARY SURVEY HAS TAUGHT ME

### Jen Sheridan, Softlink Education, explores the need to promote the different skills and services offered by school libraries.

**Since 2015,** I have had the privilege of collating comments made in the Softlink School Library Survey.

While the survey looks at statistical information, such as budgets and staffing, it also provides an opportunity for school library staff to share their thoughts about working in a school library.

Over the years, I have learnt so much from these comments that have been so generously shared. I would like to highlight a few of these key learnings.

## More needs to be done to promote the work that school library staff do, and what they can offer.

The school library is a haven for students and a place to discover a love of reading (more on that later!); this I knew during my school years.

What hadn't occurred to me as a student is that this doesn't happen by accident but through the hard work and heart of the committed staff that work in school libraries. This has been highlighted to me through comments shared, many of which have been collated in these feature documents: softlinkint.com/blog/softlinks-school-library-survey-feature-documents.
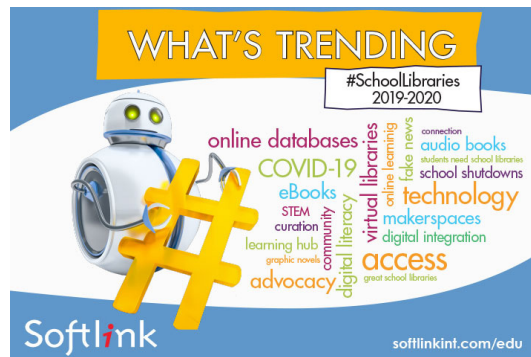


Feature document: What's trending #SchoolLibraries 2019–2020.

What has become even more evident through the survey are the information skills that I learnt, but undervalued. I never imagined I would need them outside the school essay writing and research context. I was wrong. In this digital age where there is a proliferation of information available online, the need to disseminate and critically analyse information that flashes across my screen has become vital to daily life. Unfortunately, I think very little is known about the specific skills school library staff, 'information specialists', can offer.

Here are just a few comments from the survey:

'Instead of collaborating with only those who choose to work with the teacher librarian I'd like the school to build intentional, curriculum-based teaching programmes that incorporate information and digital literacy, literary competencies, future learning skills (21st-century skills), and inquiry learning.' – Australia 2020

'We live in a digital world. Research and information literacy skills need to be on the curriculum and on the timetable. I would like to be involved in preparing our students for living/working in the digital age.' – Ireland 2018

'It would be nice to have more time with the students. By the time they graduate, I want them ready for university, being able to sit down and research anything, and write about it in a concise, professional manner.' – USA 2020

## School libraries need more funding.

With limited budgets and competing demands, it can be difficult for school leadership to choose where the funding should go. I understand that.

But the school library has great potential to be the centre for research, learning and reading, and can contribute significantly to learning outcomes and prepare students for lifelong learning and critical thinking.

The school library is an important investment in the future of our students.

Lack of funding is a repeated theme throughout the comments. What stands out is not just repeated requests for funding, but the specific needs that staff are looking to meet. What is inspiring to me is the innovation of school library staff, and what they are able to accomplish with what they have, as has been shared in the Blog softlinkint.com/blog/school-libraries-share-innovative-ideas.

'I would love to be able to update my library's digital resources and its furnishings to provide a more welcoming environment for all, and a great hub for our school's learning environment.' – Australia 2019

'I would update our aged and very large collection. I've slowly been curating a more modern, quality collection, but the lack of funds is restrictive.' – Australia 2019

'I would like more money in order to be able to purchase relevant resources.' – United Kingdom 2018

## Reading for pleasure is where it's at.

As an avid reader, you can imagine my horror when my nearly 6-year-old daughter told me reading was pointless. I just couldn't imagine someone not loving books! I set out to show her the point of reading in all the logical ways: menus, invitations – I even got STEAM kits with instruction books! But you know, you cannot get far into the survey comments without 'reading for pleasure' being mentioned. How could I, after six years, miss that part of the equation?

So, I began reading my childhood favourites to her every night. *Charlotte's web* for the win!

She is now 7 and is 'super excited' that she is allowed to borrow 'five whole books from the school library!'

Literacy is an essential skill. And reading for pleasure is where that starts.

'I have worked at this school for 20 years. When I started we had a teacher librarian. She inspired the children to read and discussed books with them. We no longer have a teacher librarian and the literacy levels of students has dropped hugely.' – Australia 2020

'I want students to read for pleasure more. Data shows the more they read, the better the test scores.' – USA 2020

'Schools need to connect the dots – literacy and library education / love of reading are linked.' – Australia 2020

### And finally …

**We need to continue to provide an avenue for school library staff to have their voice heard.**

From the 2018 survey:

'Outside our own library, I'm very aware of school libraries being closed or deprofessionalised and it concerns me greatly. It's long overdue for governments to realize the value of libraries staffed by qualified librarians and I hope the #GreatSchoolLibraries campaign will make a big impact.' – United Kingdom

'Thank you for this survey. We need evidence like this so we can continue to "fight" for the importance of this position in our schools. A school library is a special and important space and every student should have access to a trained teacher librarian and a well-resourced collection. I have been a TL for 33 years and I seem to have been part of this fight for at least 30 of those years.' – Australia

### How can you have your voice heard?

1. Join one of the fantastic campaigns advocating for school libraries.
   - Australia: Students Need School Libraries (studentsneedschoollibraries.org.au, Twitter: @NeedSchoolLibs)
   - New Zealand: School Libraries Transform (schoollibrariestransform.org.nz)
   - United Kingdom: Great School Libraries (greatschoollibraries.org.uk, Twitter: @GreatSchLibs)
2. Share this video to promote the value of school libraries: softlinkint.com/resource-details/video-great-school-libraries.
3. Participate in the annual Softlink School Library Survey for an opportunity to have your comments shared in our feature articles – follow Twitter @SoftlinkEdu for opening dates.
4. Share this article to help get the message out.

Softlink is proud to support school libraries through annual school library surveys.

To date we have produced 12 feature documents around the themes of challenges school libraries face, opportunities, trending topics, innovative ideas, promoting the library, collaboration and more.

### Image credits
Images supplied by Softlink Education

**Jen Sheridan**
School Library Survey Coordinator
Softlink Education

For more information please visit softlinkint.com/edu.

# SCIS is more

Welcome to the Term 2, 2021 issue of *Connections*.

Thank you to everyone who responded to our SCIS User Survey. We appreciate you taking the time to share your ideas on a range of topics that can help us provide better service to the school library community.

When reviewing the most searched for Help articles about SCIS, many people are interested in what SCIS is and what we provide to our subscribers.

SCIS cataloguers use the cataloguing system to create bibliographic data for resources used in schools. The 'bib' data is created in a machine-readable format called MARC-21 and according to the international Resource Description and Analysis (RDA) guidelines and the SCIS Standards for Cataloguing and Data Entry (SSCDE), which is governed by the Information Services Standards Committee (ISSC).

Schools subscribe to SCIS to provide library data to their students that is consistent and of the highest quality. To meet these expectations, SCIS cataloguers create original data by (where possible) physical inspection of the items they are cataloguing. We know that our subscribers expect data that best meets students' learning needs by optimising their search and discovery results in their library management system. To achieve this, the SCIS team creates data including Dewey Decimal classifications and 'authorised access points'. Access points are formally devised headings with a reference structure, including the names of people and corporations, series titles, genres, and topics. A reference structure includes pointing related headings to each other (e.g. 'Science Fiction' is *related* to 'Dystopian Fiction'; 'Greyhounds' are a *narrower* example of 'dogs') or it may involve clarifying ambiguity due to synonyms for like-concepts (e.g. 'wildfires' are considered the *same* as 'bushfires'). This reference data is stored in the SCIS Name Authorities, Subject Authorities, and Series Authorities.

We also add headings from the Schools Online Thesaurus (ScOT) to each record. ScOT is a collection of curriculum-related topics owned and managed by Education Services Australia and used to tag and describe the Australian Curriculum itself. ScOT headings provide a direct link between records and Australian Curriculum content descriptions. ScOT is licensed for educational non-commercial use.

The entire SCIS database can be searched from scisdata.com, and some subscribers like to do this to help them select new resources to purchase for their library or help them meet curriculum needs.

Thank you again for your feedback on using SCIS. We invite you to connect with us via our social media channels. You can find us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and contact us via help@scisdata.com.

**Caroline Hartley**
SCIS Manager
Education Services Australia

# THE TIME TO READ

**At Queenwood School for Girls in Sydney, the literacy committee began a long-term, complex project to increase reading for enjoyment across the school. With the support of key stakeholders, they set about to provide the resources and the opportunities to draw the whole school community into the project.**



**As educators we often** lament that our students are no longer reading books for enjoyment. Sadly, our students are not alone. With an ever growing curriculum and the frenetic pace of the academic school year many teachers are reading for enjoyment far less than ever before – or worse, not at all.

In 2019, with the support of a research grant from the Association of Independent Schools of NSW (AIS), Queenwood began to tackle this problem for students. It was critical to the success of the project that our staff modelled strong reading behaviour and this article will focus on the strategies we used to achieve this.

### Time dedicated on the school timetable to reading

The existing teaching timetable needed to be completely overhauled to create a dedicated 20 minutes per day of sustained silent reading. It took many meetings with key stakeholders from the Executive, pastoral teams and heads of department to generate this time. This was a long, drawn-out process that presented many road blocks to overcome. However, including of all these key stakeholders ensured open, honest and thorough communications and maximum buy-in from all the key areas of the school. The clear expectation for all staff during these 20 minutes is to stop formal teaching and learning, pick up a book of their choice and read silently. Not only does this model strong reading behaviour to our K–12 students, it also gives staff permission to stop and 'just read'. It is the understanding at Queenwood that whether the staff member is teaching at the time or off class they too will stop and read. This includes our non-teaching staff and Executive members.

> "The clear expectation for all staff during these 20 minutes is to stop formal teaching and learning, pick up a book of their choice and read silently."

### Books as gifts

As the QLiteracy Committee began to design our 'Just Read' reading program, we realised putting books into the hands of our staff was critical to its long-term success. We quickly understood that daily dedicated reading time would mean that staff would move quickly through their own book collections – and needed more! The school libraries were not in a position to support the increased borrowing habits of 150 staff taking part in Just Read, in addition to all our students. To enhance motivation to read amongst our staff, the QLiteracy Committee decided that choice of reading material for staff was a powerful motivator in gaining staff commitment to the program. All staff were invited to select a book of their choice as the Christmas holiday period commenced, as a gift from the school. This was a very special way to formally introduce Just Read to our staff.

All staff were invited to select a book of their choice as the Christmas holiday period commenced, as a gift from the school.

## Staff collection in the library

Very early in the project it became apparent that staff would be relying on our school libraries to support their daily reading practice. Our collection development policy grew to include a staff collection within the libraries that our staff now utilise heavily. Staff are encouraged to review and recommend books from this collection for their peers. These recommendations are on display in the library and are accessed consistently.

## 'Currently Reading' posters

It is not enough to simply give staff time to read – it is critical to make reading and books a visual constant around our school campuses. The Currently Reading posters are designed in-house to allow students to view and engage with what staff are currently reading (Senior School) or what they have loved to read in the past (Junior School). As we envisaged, these posters have created conversations about books between staff and students. However, an unexpected positive of the posters is the discourse it has generated between staff members themselves about these books.

## Drip-feeding for success

The Just Read project has been in the making for many years, from as far back as 2017, as part of the work of the QLiteracy Committee. Planning began around this time with the first Just

Read session starting in January 2020. Information about the project was deliberately released to staff in small, manageable chunks over many months, as staff buy-in was critical to the success of our project. We monitored how staff were reacting to the reading program and we solved any issues as they arose. Changing a school's culture takes time.

## Targeted professional development

Staff valued the keynote address given by our academic mentor Dr Margaret Merga prior to Just Read starting in January 2020. Dr Merga spoke passionately of the importance of reading for student wellbeing and the improved literacy outcomes daily reading brings. She stressed the critical role our staff have in modelling reading behaviour. Dr Merga's presentation strengthened support for the reading project amongst our staff.

Although the AIS project ('Building Readers for Life: A Sustained Silent Reading Program') will conclude in December 2021 we look forward to continuing Just Read. We have observed powerful indicators of change within our school. This includes increased borrowing statistics for students and staff and incidental conversations about books. We are thrilled that some of our staff have developed a daily reading habit for the first time in their lives.

For more information of our project, please access the AIS webpage: aisnsw.edu.au/teachers-and-staff/research-and-data-in-schools/the-evidence-institute/school-based-research-projects/queenwood-school-for-girls.

## Image credits

Images supplied by Gabrielle Mace

**Gabrielle Mace**
Head of Library and Information Services
Rennie and Medway Libraries
Head of QLiteracy Committee
Queenwood School for Girls

**Merrilyn Lean**
Science Teacher
QLiteracy Committee Member
Queenwood School for Girls

# Professional learning

**SCIS** Schools Catalogue Information Service

## Term 2 2021
### THE COLLECTIONS SERIES

**The Collections Series** will teach school library staff everything they need to know about the Schools Catalogue Information Service (SCIS) and cataloguing. Each of these unique webinars is a standalone session - attend just one webinar or all four sessions!

If you are new to school libraries you should start with **Introduction to SCIS Data** and **Making the most of SCIS**. When you have mastered the SCIS basics, you can explore **Using SCIS to enhance teaching and learning** and **The uniqueness of SCIS cataloguing standards**.

| Introduction to SCIS Data | Making the most of SCIS | Using SCIS to enhance teaching and learning | The uniqueness of SCIS cataloguing standards |
|---|---|---|---|
| Monday 17 May, 2 pm (AEST) | Monday 31 May, 2 pm (AEST) | Wednesday 9 June, 3.30 pm (AEST) | Wednesday 16 June, 3.30 pm (AEST) |

**FIND OUT MORE & REGISTER NOW**    scisdata.com/professional-learning    help@scisdata.com

# SCHOOL LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT: FOREST HILL COLLEGE

**The school library: more than just the physical space.**

### What is your job title, and what does your job entail?

Forest Hill College (FHC) is a co-educational government secondary school of approximately 580 students based in Burwood East in Melbourne's east.

Our school library is run by two library technicians in a job-share arrangement, with one of us there each day.

Our job entails everything to do with running a school library: day-to-day circulation activities, collection development and acquisitions, cataloguing, promotion of library services, budgeting, making displays, and strategic planning for the future of the library. We also help with student supervision, teach staff and students how to use the library catalogue and assist with research skills. We work closely with teaching staff to make sure we support their needs, for example, by developing study guides with curated information to support student learning.

### What is the most rewarding aspect of working in a school library, and why?

The most rewarding aspect of working in a school library is interacting with the students – chatting to them, helping them find what they need, recommending books to students that they enjoy and being someone who is available just to listen.

It was so rewarding to see the students streaming back to the library once remote teaching finished and they were allowed back to school. To see their excitement at being able to borrow books again was amazing.

### What do you see as the most important part of the library's role in the school community?

I like to believe that the library is central to the success of the school and its students. A library is a study space, a reading space, a social space and a safe place.

But I also see that another important part of the library's role in the school community is beyond the school grounds. I believe that promoting the benefits of reading to the wider school community is integral to creating a school-wide culture of reading.

> " I believe that promoting the benefits of reading to the wider school community is integral to creating a school-wide culture of reading. "

### Are there any current issues or challenges facing your library? How are you working to overcome these?

Being a secondary school, I think our biggest challenge is to keep teens interested in recreational reading as they get older. I am very interested in the work of Dr Margaret Merga, and the Teen Reading in a Digital Era research project conducted by Deakin University and Queensland University of Technology.

At a local level though, we are working on building our school-wide reading culture – getting all staff involved so that the students see that the main adults in their lives also read for pleasure. I'd like to extend this to the whole school community, including the families of our students.

It is always a challenge when you get the students who say, 'I don't like reading'. To combat that, we are continuously working on chatting with the students as they look for something to read. We are working on genrefying our library – arranging our fiction collection by genre, rather than alphabetically by the author's surname – to make it easier for the students find what they want to read.

### How do you promote reading and literacy in your school? Are there any challenges in doing so?

We are constantly looking at ways to promote reading and literacy within the school community.

> " **The most rewarding aspect of working in a school library is interacting with the students – chatting to them, helping them find what they need, recommending books to students that they enjoy and being someone who is available just to listen.** "

These range from distributing a weekly library newsletter to the whole community, having an active library Instagram account @fhclibrary, and general day-to-day interactions with staff and students.

Last year we ran our first annual FHC Reads program over 2 weeks in November. During this time, we ran a number of activities and competitions for students aimed at promoting recreational reading. I supplied our home group teachers with videos and activities to share with students during their daily home group meetings. We also filmed some of our Year 7 students interviewing our school Principal and other teachers about reading and what they like to read, which we shared with the whole school community. Staff contributed photos of themselves reading to model to our students that they also read for pleasure. Even our two wellbeing dogs joined in.

One of the most impactful things we have done to promote the library and reading within the school community was to upgrade our library management software to Oliver v5. This allows us to provide a library service to the school community 24/7 and promotes the idea that the library is more than just a physical space. Oliver v5 allows our school community to browse the library catalogue with an easy and attractive interface, get reading recommendations, and access curated reading suggestions and study guides to support the school curriculum via Softlink's LearnPath software that integrates with Oliver v5.

Developing a school-wide reading culture is vital to the continued success of the school library. One of the things we do to promote recreational reading to our staff is to provide a pop-up staffroom library. This allows staff to easily access reading material and be able to borrow and return books without having to find time to visit the actual library. Since we have implemented this pop-up library we have seen a big increase in our level of staff borrowing.

Our many plans for future activities include starting a student bookclub, holding lunchtime activities, running reading challenges and organising author visits. We are also considering installing a street library at the entrance to the school to engage our local community with reading and as a way to make use of books weeded from the library collection. All this to keep the love of reading alive at Forest Hill College.


Wellness dog Echo.

## How do you encourage students to make use of the library?

Encouraging students to make use of the library is an ongoing challenge. We aim to make the library a friendly and inviting place, centred around their needs.

We encourage visits from the school's two wellness dogs, Casey and Echo, which the students love. By having Casey and Echo as regular visitors to the library, it makes the library seem a happy, inviting space.

We have an activity table set up with social and group activities, such as a jigsaw puzzle that anyone can work on, or chess.

This helps promote the idea that the library is a space to build community in the school.

This year we will be starting a kindness garden in the library courtyard. Students will be able to participate in lunchtime activities to paint kindness rocks with encouraging messages, and then take rocks from the garden on days they need a bit of encouragement themselves.

The students would probably say the most important part of the library is that it is somewhere they can get out of the weather!

> " **Developing a school-wide reading culture is vital to the continued success of the school library.** "

## What is your favourite thing about SCIS?

SCIS makes the life of a school librarian so much easier. The obvious benefit of the service that SCIS provides is that it makes cataloguing so much quicker and easier. I love being able to use the SCIS website to find and easily catalogue websites and online digital resources when I am putting together study guides on particular topics. This was especially useful when we were remote teaching during 2020 and we needed to make sure the library had online resources easily accessible for our school community.

The staff at SCIS are knowledgeable and always ready to help with any queries. SCIS provides an invaluable service that enhances the value of all school libraries.

## Image credits
Images supplied by Helen Farch

**Helen Farch**
Library Technician
Forest Hill College

# GENREFICATION 3.5 YEARS LATER: REFLECTIONS

**In 2017 Susan Davenport wrote an article for *Connections* discussing the process Radford College took to genrefy their senior library's fiction collection. Three years later, Susan reflects on the library's genrefication journey.**

Radford College Secondary Library (SL) for years 5–12 students began our genrefication journey in 2017. This article reflects upon those first steps and what changes have been implemented since.

## What have we learnt?

### Genrefication works!

Yes, it *really* does. Our years 5–12 students find the SL collection easy to navigate. They know where their favourite genres are, and they regularly peruse the shelves. They move beyond their known authors and have a good rummage amongst the shelves for similar titles by authors new to them. At the shelves, students will often select within an arm's reach if their desired title is not there, demonstrating a confidence that the selection will be relevant.

### You're never finished

Genrefication is a fluid entity — it allows the library to be responsive to trends, curriculum, and react to borrowing data. This flexibility is key and requires an agile team who are prepared to undo previous work for the benefit of their users. We have added, decommissioned and changed whole genres!

> " This flexibility is key and requires an agile team who are prepared to undo previous work for the benefit of their users. We have added, decommissioned, and changed whole genres! "

### Review your loans statistics

The loans statistics are a great data-driven insight into your collection. You can identify trends unique to **your** library. Data can:
- correct perceptions of genre popularity you may be inadvertently basing on 5+ years ago
- identify an emerging or overlooked genre
- indicate that a genre needs to be decommissioned and the titles redistributed.

### Perfection is unattainable

You're going to get some things wrong. Unclear genre images, names or catalogue use may need to change, and that's OK! We regularly consult sources such as SCIS genres, subject headings and Goodreads, but some titles could fit several genres, for example, a time-travelling, magic-wielding, adventure-comedy-romance. Pick the best one and see how it goes. Moving a languishing title into a different genre could change its borrowing rates.

### Flexibility in shelving and layout

When you're not limited to an A to Z run that has to have a logical flow, you have a lot more flexibility in how your shelving is arranged. We have experimented with many configurations, which can change not only loan rates, but also library design and use.

### Some things become easier

- A book mis-shelved in the wrong genre is easily spotted and resolved.
- Stocktake in genres breaks a massive project into smaller manageable chunks.

### Project one: biographies

In discussion with our Head of English, we sought to better support the Year 9 Biography unit.

Students find it challenging to choose a biography as most are about people they don't know and the covers usually assume some knowledge.

The project objectives were to:
- identify subgenres, acknowledging that some will be very small, that may appeal to students
- differentiate between a biography and memoir.

The result is a SL Biography/Memoir collection divided into subgenres. The genre label has **Biography** or **Memoir** written under the genre image. This has had a positive result for our students who can narrow their selection to 1.5 shelves instead of the entire A to Z Biography section.

The Biography/Memoir subgenres are: Adventure, Animals, Arts, Crime, Cultural, Education, Leaders, Medical, Resilience, Sports, STEM, Survival & Refugees, Travel, and War.

## Project two: Junior Library collection

The Junior Library (JL) for years K–4 took the plunge and genrefied their novels. In reviewing the existing set of SL genres, the smaller collection needed fewer genres that were tailored to the interests of Junior students.

Having gone through the process once, the whole library team collaborated to find the genres and implementation methods that would best suit the collection and users. There was much discussion about which collections should be genrefied using which genres, and which collections suited a different path.

The key aspects of the revamped Junior Library collection are:
- an A–Z Picture Books collection
- First Chapters collection which is predominately in boxes by series or theme
- genrefied novels.

With teacher-librarian-led introduction and guidance, our students find the arrangement of the collection easy to use, and respond well to the genres. Much like the years 5–12 students before them, they have found the same benefits of choosing within an identified genre: reducing the feeling of being overwhelmed by choice, and making exploring new titles easier. It encourages library lesson activities that challenge them to borrow from different genres and allows for data-driven management.

### Managing genrefication across two libraries

Where the genres are the same in both libraries, the same image and language is used. This has had a positive outcome of recognition when Junior students transition to the Secondary Library!

If a title is in both libraries, it is absolutely fine for it to be in different genres. We consider it more important to be relevant to our users, for example, the *Max Crumbly* series is in **School** (JL) and **Humorous** (SL).

## Project three: label icons

In 2020 we had a long look at the labels that we were using to represent our genres. The majority of these were commercially purchased with a few that we had made ourselves. Some were a good fit, others were obtuse, and there was little cohesion. On looking at the set as a whole, it was clear that there was a definite bias towards Caucasian males and Eurocentric images.

The team commenced a collaborative process of choosing neutral images that avoided gender and race, and were a clear representation of the genre. We asked students which images spoke to them best. Where the genre was used in both libraries, it was important that the image was understandable by all ages. Some were an easy choice, while others were excruciatingly challenging.

Our new images were sourced from creative commons icon websites and catalogued individually to include the necessary attribution requirements.

## Genrefication top tips

- Invest each year in educating your new students and all relevant staff about how the system works.
- Be prepared to revisit a decision and redo previous work.
- Note what your users are asking for – is there an emerging trend? Is an aspect confusing?
- Have clear signage that is consistent in style for a professional retail look.

- Have a map at the OPAC with the layout and genre images.
- Explore your catalogue's features and talk with the software provider.
- Include the genre labels on the catalogue as people are very responsive to visual images.
- Create your own labels that speak to your users.
- Use labels that are easily removed so that a change 2 years later is easier to complete (really wished we'd thought of this earlier).
- Create bookmarks with the genre logo to slot into the books during cataloguing. The genre allocation and label application may be some time apart and this has proven very efficient.



**Great idea! Have a map at the OPAC with the layout and genre images.**

Overall, we continue to be really pleased with how the genrefication project was received, implemented, and adapted. It has greatly enhanced our collection and our users are the primary beneficiaries. I would highly recommend that you consider how it could work in your library!

## Image credits

Images supplied by Susan Davenport

**Susan Davenport**
Head of Library and Information Services
Radford College

**Secondary Library genres:** Adventure, Animals, Arts, Coming of Age, Crime, Cultural, Dystopian, Fact not Fiction, Fantasy, Fantasy Romance, Friendship & Family, Funky Fairy Tales, Gamer, Graphic Novels, Historical, Horror, Humorous, Languages, Manga, Mystery & Spies, Resilience, Romance, Science Fiction, Short Stories, Sport, Supernatural, Survival & Refugees, War.

**Junior Library genres:** Adventure, Animals, Classics, Fantasy, Friendship & Family, Graphic Novels, Historical, Humorous, Languages, Manga, Mystery & Spies, School, Sport.

# Education Lending Right (ELR) School Library Survey 2020–21

**Many thanks to** everyone who participated in last year's ELR School Library Survey. Considering the disruptions experienced during 2020, we expected to struggle to receive the required number of surveys from schools. Instead, 348 surveys were completed before the end of the school year: a tremendous total that compares favourably with previous years.

The ELR School Library Survey is conducted by Education Services Australia (ESA) on behalf of the Australian Government's Office for the Arts. The purpose of the survey is to determine an estimate of the number of copies of books available in Australian school libraries. The Office for the Arts then combines the school scores with university and TAFE estimates to determine how much money will be paid to eligible authors and publishers to provide recompense for revenue lost because their books are available for free in school libraries.

Among the most commonly-available titles in last year's survey were:

- *Spanish omelet* by Jackie Tidey and Trish Hill (SCIS no. 1000000)
- *English interactions* (*Book 3*) by Lesley Andrews and Janet Young (SCIS no. 1000079)
- *Making waves* by Jackie Warrick and Stanley Wong (SCIS no. 1000249)
- *How to be normal in Australia: a practical guide to the uncharted territory of Antipodean relationships* by Robert Treborlang and Mark Knight (SCIS no. 1000251)
- *In the zone* by Jackie Warrick and Lisa Coutts (SCIS no. 1000252)
- *Kaz* by Jackie Warrick and Lisa Coutts (SCIS no. 1000254)
- *Gold diggers* by Paul Collins and Michele Gaudion (SCIS no. 1000268)
- *2 Real 2000* by Paul Collins and Nick Buttfield (SCIS no. 1000270)

Other popular authors included:

- David Drew
- Ian Lea and Roger Harvey
- Isabel Anderson
- Janeen Brian
- Robyn Opie.

In addition to those schools who were sent individual invitations to participate, we surveyed government schools in Tasmania and NSW by centrally extracting data through digital library vendors, that is, SirsiDynix and Oliver 5 (Softlink).

Primary, secondary and F–12 schools from all states and territories were selected to participate, as were schools from the Government, Catholic and Independent sectors.

Of those people who completed the participant survey, 97 per cent reported that ELR was not time-consuming; most completed it in less than five minutes. It was reported that 31 per cent of respondents had participated in ELR in previous years.

Of survey respondents, 26 per cent identified themselves as teacher librarians, 30 per cent as library officers, 16 per cent as library technicians and 17 per cent as librarians. Other people who completed the survey included IT staff, administrative staff, teacher assistants, heads of library, and a library manager.

Some 12 per cent of participants required help to run the ELR survey. Most contacted Education Services Australia via email or telephone. Some contacted their library services provider.

Comments received from participants included:

- I am happy to assist with the survey as it is a great support of authors and publishers (from a Victorian government secondary school).
- Thank you that we can help give authors the credit they deserve :) (from a NSW Independent F–12 school)

Congratulations to Sally Castledine at Castletown PS in Esperance, Western Australia for completing the participants' survey and having her name drawn as the winner of a $150 voucher. Sally opted for a Booktopia voucher after being tempted by some of the alluring epicurean options available.

Education Services Australia is always keen to hear suggestions from library staff about ways the ELR survey can be improved. If you would like to offer any advice, please email: daniel.hughes@esa.edu.au.

**Daniel Hughes**
ELR Project Manager
Education Services Australia

Further information about the ELR scheme is available at arts.gov.au/funding-and-support/lending-rights.

# WEBSITE + APP REVIEWS

### ASTRONOMY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

**csiro.au/en/Research/Astronomy/Astronomy-education-programs**

The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) has developed a comprehensive website to encourage students to delve into aspects of astronomy and space. Highlighting the CSIRO's undertakings, material on the website includes: radio astronomy; spacecraft tracking; Australia and Apollo 11; satellite data; teacher development; and details of the program that allows students to take control of the Parkes radio telescope.

SCIS no: 5354179

### AUSLAN STORYTIME

**apps.apple.com/au/app/auslan-storytime/id975809635**

Aimed at young children who sign, or are learning to sign using Auslan, this app features illustrated videos of classic children's books signed by young students at the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children. Emphasis is placed on assisting teachers and parents to gain new insights into telling stories in Auslan. Additional stories are available as in-app purchases.

SCIS no: 5354324

### BUILDING AN EARTHQUAKE READY FUTURE

**tepapa.govt.nz/learn/for-educators/teaching-resources/teaching-resource-building-earthquake-ready-future**

This stimulating website presented by the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa explores earthquakes around the world and the effects they have both structurally and socially. Students in New Zealand Curriculum Levels 1–4 are encouraged to look at solutions and create prototypes to test these solutions.

SCIS no: 5354186

### ONLINE LEARNING RESOURCES

**sea.museum/learn/learn-from-home**

Developed by the Australian National Maritime Museum these online resources encourage students who may be learning from home to undertake a variety of engaging maritime topics. The resources are curriculum linked and have subsets suitable for primary and secondary students.

SCIS no: 5354194

### ECO-SCHOOLS

**eco-schools.org.au**

Both primary and secondary schools are invited to participate in this environmental education program. Students follow a seven-step program to investigate and act on one or more of the following themes: biodiversity; climate and energy; litter and waste; healthy lifestyles; social justice; and waste and water. Details of 2021 campaigns and competitions are present.

SCIS no: 5354198

### LASER CUTTERS IN EDU

**schrockguide.net/lasercutters.html**

The link between digital resources and physical resources is facilitated via this informative site. Laser cutters/engravers are increasingly used in schools to enhance learning outcomes and instructional strategies. Background material is available on curriculum projects, vector design tools, engagement and safety.

SCIS no: 5354224

### THE LITTLE LIBRARY CAFE

**thelittlelibrarycafe.com/book-index**

Author Kate Young writes about both cooking and literature and has combined her interest in the two for this resource. Each book selected has a recipe relating to it. An extensive bibliography covers period and contemporary fiction, plays, poetry, children's books and picture books. Teachers can search via recipes or books.

SCIS no: 5354232

### PICTURE BOOKS WITH MATHEMATICAL CONTENT

**nzmaths.co.nz/picture-books-mathematical-content**

The New Zealand Ministry of Education has selected engaging picture books that contain mathematical content. A spreadsheet cross-references Curriculum Levels 1–4 with books emphasising algebra, number, geometry, measurement or statistics. Teaching activities are outlined for each title.

SCIS no: 5354237

### SWIFT PLAYGROUNDS

**apps.apple.com/au/app/swift-playgrounds/id908519492**

Developed by Apple, Swift is a programming language that is used by professionals to build a variety of apps. This free IOS app encourages secondary students with no coding experience to master elementary coding using puzzles, a variety of challenges and guided lessons.

SCIS no: 1823566

### TIMES TABLE QUIZ!

**apps.apple.com/au/app/times-tables-quiz/id441001315**

Students will be occupied by this IOS app which may assist them to learn their times tables. The tables are arranged in order of difficulty ranging from 2 times 2 to 12 times 12 and are multi-choice. Competition among peers and family is encouraged.

SCIS no: 5354335

### VIRTUAL FIELD TRIPS

**discoveryeducation.com/community/virtual-field-trips**

The blurb on the website says it all. 'No permission slip required. These virtual events let educators take students to amazing places.' Emanating from Discovery Education, these virtual visits take students to a wide range of locations, from visiting a tractor factory in Illinois to Shakespeare's birthplace.

SCIS no: 1966388

**Nigel Paull**
Teacher Librarian
North Coast, NSW

*The websites and apps selected for review are often of a professional nature and should be initially viewed by teachers and library staff to determine suitability for students. The links, content and address of these sites are subject to change.*

# SCiS Barcode scanners

## Essential for your school library

**$618.00**

### MST Bundle – CTW1 & XL1 (SAVE $50)
*Scanner bundle*

**$649.00**

### Cipherlab 1560P
*Portable scanner*

**$229.00**

### Quickscan QD2131
*Corded scanner*

**$269.00**

### Cipherlab 1500P
*Corded scanner*

**$499.00**

### MST – XL1
*Portable bluetooth scanner*

**$369.00**

### Cipherlab 1663
*Portable pocket-sized bluetooth scanner*

**$169.00**

### MST – CT-W1
*Portable scanner*

**$189.00**

### Datalogic Touch TD1100 65 Light
*Corded scanner*